

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 4115

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT

SUBJ: PINOCHET CRITICIZES POLITICIANS

1. SUMMARY. DURING JULY 11 CEREMONY INSTALLING NEW CABINET, CHIEF OF STATE PINOCHET REPEATED EARLIER DENUNCIATIONS OF POLITICIANS AND EMPHASIZED JUNTA IS NOT A TRANSITION REGIME BETWEEN TWO TRADITIONAL CIVILIAN GOVERNMENTS. REMARKS MAY HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED BY INSISTENT PRESSURE, EXPLICITLY REJECTED IN COMPOSITION OF NEW CABINET, TO BROADEN BASE OF GOVT AND TO INCLUDE MORE CIVILIANS IN TOP-LEVEL POSTS. END SUMMARY.

2. PINOCHET DESCRIBED CABINET CHANGE AS MARKING END OF "FIRST STAGE" OF MILITARY GOVT IN WHICH REESTABLISHMENT OF ORDER AND INTERNAL SECURITY WERE OVERRIDING CONCERN. "SECOND STAGE" NOW BEGINNING WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY "THE DIFFICULT AND PATRIOTIC MISSION OF SAVING CHILE FROM THE CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION WHICH WE INHERITED."

3. BUT, SAID PINOCHET, "AS I HAVE STATED MANY TIMES AND I NOW REPEAT CATEGORICALLY, WE WILL NEVER BECOME A SILVER BRIDGE TO ENABLE AMBITIOUS POLITICIANS TO RETURN TO POWER SINCE, BY THEIR WEAKNESS OF CHARACTER OR THEIR FEAR, THEY HAVE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VIRTUAL DESTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY. -- WE ARE NOT NOR DO WE ASPIRE TO BE, A TRANSITIONAL REGIME BETWEEN TWO POLITICAL GOVERNMENTS." PINOCHET REITERATED HIS CALL, FIRST
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ISSUED ON SIX MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF JUNTA, FOR A "GREAT CIVIC

MOVEMENT" TO SUPPORT AND PUT INTO PRACTICE THE PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH JUNTA STANDS.

4. COMMENT. WHILE JUNTA BLASTS AT POLITICIANS AND POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NOW STANDARD, TIMING OF CURRENT OUTBURST POSSIBLY TRIGGERED BY WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SPECULATION ABOUT A MAJOR INFLUX OF CIVILIANS INTO CABINET AND PRIVATE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OLD-LINE CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS TO JUNTA TO BROADEN ITS POLITICAL BASE. FACT THAT CIVILIANS HAVE REAL POWER AND INFLUENCE ONLY IN ECONOMIC SPHERE MAY BE EVEN MORE ELOQUENT TESTIMONY TO MILITARY UNWILLINGNESS TO HEED THIS ADVICE THAN PINOCHET'S WORDS. HOWEVER, POLITICIAN CLOSE TO PINOCHET CONFIRMS, PINOCHET DISCUSSED LABOR PORTFOLIO WITH HIM, LATER TOLD HIM IT SEEMED PREFERABLE FOR MILITARY TO TAKE BRUNT OF ANY PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ARISING FROM EXPECTED ADDITIONAL BELT-TIGHTENING AND TO WAIT AWHILE LONGER BEFORE BRINGING LARGER NUMBER OF CIVILIANS INTO CABINET; THIS SOURCE SAID PINOCHET'S REMARKS ABOUT POLITICIANS AIMED AT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND ESPECIALLY EDUARDO FREI, WHICH SOUNDS PLAUSIBLE TO US. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT DECREE-LAW NAMING NEW CABINET IS SIGNED BY PINOCHET AS CHIEF OF STATE BUT NOT BY OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS. POPPER

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